

Davies Manor  
9336 Davies Plantation Road  
Memphis vicinity  
Shelby County  
Tennessee

HABS No. TN-183

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TENN  
79-MEMPH  
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C.

HABS  
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79-MEMPHIS  
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# HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

DAVIES MANOR

HABS No. TN-183

Location: 9336 Davies Plantation Road, Memphis vicinity, Shelby County, Tennessee.  
Latitude: 35° 13' 30"  
Longitude: 89° 45' 17.5"

Present Owner and Occupant: Mrs. Ellen Davies-Rodgers.

Present Use: Used as headquarters for: Zachariah-Davies chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution; Old Stage Road Society Children of the American Revolution; Shelby Chapter Sons of American Revolution.

Significance: This building is an early example of log construction in western Tennessee and may be the earliest such structure in Shelby County. It retains much of its original character despite later additions to the rear.

## PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

### A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: After 1831.
2. Architect: Unknown.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The following is the chain of title of this house. Information is from the deeds in the Register of Shelby County.

1830 Deed August 14, 1830 recorded February 29, 1835 in Book D page 290 (320 acres - \$640.00)  
Thomas Henderson

to  
Emanuel Young

1831 Deed January 26, 1831 recorded June 18, 1831 in Book C page 69 (320 acres - \$640.00)  
Emanuel Young

to  
Joel W. Royster

1873 Deed January 22, 1873 recorded July 2, 1873 in Book 95 page 285 (Conveyed in 1851, but deeds lost)  
Joel W. Royster heirs

to  
L. E. Davis and J. B. Davis

1930 Deed March 15, 1930 recorded May 11, 1931 in  
Book 1357 page 51  
W. L. Davies (son of J. B. Davis)  
to  
Frances Ellen Davies

4. Builder: Legend says that the original parlor and upper room were built by the Indians.
  5. Original plans and construction: The original north portion of the log structure was a simple rectangle. (The front faces west).
  6. Alterations and additions: The south portion of the log structure is an addition dating from the 1840s. (The north portion is the original portion of the log structure). The original dogtrot in what is now the central hall was enclosed in the 1930s by the present owner. Several other additions (frame) have been built at the rear of the log structure.
- B. Historical Context: Published statements that this house was built near the Old Stage Road in 1807 are unfounded. There was no European settlement in present Shelby County prior to 1819 except those on the Chickasaw Bluffs; and the Stage Road was opened in 1829. Evidence from the deeds indicates that Joel W. Royster built the house after 1831; by then it was indeed near the Stage Road from Memphis via Jackson to Nashville. It is said to be the oldest house now standing in Shelby County.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The house, originally a simple rectangle, now has an irregular floor plan due to the rear additions. The log walls in the front section give the house its overall frontier character.
2. Condition of fabric: Good; well-maintained.

### B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The approximate measurements are 20' east to west by 50' north to south. The number of stories is two. The front bays number three.
2. Foundations: Probably stone.
3. Wall construction and structural system: The hewn logs (approximately 9" x 13") support 3-1/2" x 6" hand hewn beams which

span east to west. They are spaced approximately 24" on centers. The center portion of the original portion was later filled in and has horizontal wood siding.

4. Porch, balcony: There is a two-story porch covering the front central part of the house. It has two simple boxed columns and a simple pedimented gable roof.

A small, simple balustrated balcony is on the front central second floor.

5. Chimneys: There is a brick chimney at either end of the building (north and south). Each is an outside end, with stepped construction at midway.
6. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: The main entry door is at the center of the front facade. It is flanked by sidelights, and its door has six panels. It is enclosed with a modern screen door with a grille. There is a door immediately above the main entry which gives access to the small balcony. It has a modern screen door with a grille. Another door on the north side is close to the west front. Doorways on the rear have been altered with the addition of later constructions.
  - b. Windows: There are windows on the west (front) elevation on each of two levels (one each side of the doorways). They are double-hung wood sash with 9/9 lights and sidelights. Any windows on the east rear have been altered with later construction.
7. Roof:
  - a. Shape, covering: The house has a simple gable roof from north to south. It is covered with red shingles.
  - b. Cornice: Simple wood cornice.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: Excluding the modern additions, this building is simple in plan with one room each side of a central hall on each of the two levels.
2. Stairways: There is a stairway in either room off the hall. The one in the south room is situated in the northeast corner and is a dog-leg to the left with fourteen risers (8-1/4" risers; 8-1/2" x 3'-5" treads). It has a simple wood railing and balusters. The

stairway in the north room is situated in the southeast corner. It is a dog-leg to the right with fifteen risers (8" risers; 9-1/4" x 3'-4" treads); it is enclosed from the fifth riser up.

3. Flooring: 4-1/2" to 6-1/2" boards laid north to south.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls are white-washed logs. The partitions are of board. Ceilings are masonite between the beams.

Ceiling heights on the first floor: North room, 8' - 7"; South room, 8' - 3-1/2" to bottom of beams.

5. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: The doors between the north rooms and halls have vertical boards while those between the south rooms and halls have four panels. They measure about 2'-10" wide and vary in height from 5'-4" to 7'-0". The board doors are 7/8" thick; the paneled variety are 1-3/8" thick. The door surrounds are plain in design.

- b. Windows: Not recorded.

6. Decorative features and trim: The mantels are of simple boards with flat moldings and wood shelf. They have brick hearths and brick fireplaces. Fireplaces are located on the south and north exterior walls.

7. Hardware: Mostly standard variety; butt hinges; some rim locks.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The house is located on an extensive plot of wooded land out in the country. The building has a fine setting, undisturbed by encroachment of civilization. An axial road comes in from the west to a clearing in front of the house. The immediate site is neatly grassed and enclosed with a white rail fence.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Interview:

Interview with Mrs. Ellen Davies-Rodgers, August 14, 1972.

B. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Property records. Register of Shelby County. (Address of repository was not indicated at the time this survey was made).

2. Secondary and published sources:

Tennessee Historical Markers (Nashville: Tennessee Historical Commission, 1972), p. 183.

Prepared by: Robert C. Giebner  
Project Supervisor  
West Tennessee Project, 1972

Richard H. Hulan  
Project Historian  
West Tennessee Project, 1972

Edited by: Susan McCown  
HABS Historian  
Spring 1985

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This 1972 project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) in cooperation with the Tennessee Historical Commission and the West Tennessee Historical Society. Under the direction of John Poppeliers, Chief of HABS, the project was completed by Robert C. Giebner (University of Arizona), project supervisor, and Richard H. Hulan, project historian (Nashville).

Jack E. Boucher, HABS staff photographer, took the photographs of the house in March 1974.

The written data was edited in the Spring of 1985 by Susan McCown, HABS architectural historian in the Washington, D.C. office, for transmittal to the Library of Congress.